

# Agricultural Research Service

## Review, Refresh and Reform

### Cultural Transformation Initiatives Status of Work

(May 2011 Update)

SPONSOR AND TEAM LEADER	TASKS	TIMEFRAME AND STATUS
<b>AUTHORSHIP INITIATIVE</b>		
<b>Rexroad and Spence</b>	Review current P&P 152.2 to ensure that requirements are clear and unambiguous	Done
	Review the recommendations received from the Technician Development Working Group and will revise P&P as appropriate	Done
	Develop an Agency- wide communication to ensure all employees understand Agency policy and position expectations	By June 2011
	Work with HR to develop training modules for RLs, SYs and technicians to ensure consistent application of the P&P	Included in new on-boarding materials for scientific support staff and scientist positions
<b>SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT STAFF DEVELOPMENT</b>		
<b>Rexroad and McGuire and Buckley</b>	survey SSS to verify that the issues identified on Y2C are representative of the SSS series	Done
	Assess recommendations from the Technician Development Working Group report and subsequent AC discussions and propose implementation for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical training and education, early career support, long-term career development (e.g., leadership programs, detail assignments, cross training and tailored training specifically for the SSS);</li> </ul>	Done A preliminary training module was developed by HR for use at new SY orientation. Suggestion has been made to require at least 4 hours of supervisory training for scientists who will supervise anyone (see related item under leadership)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a formal organization for scientific support staff (e.g. SSS Advisory Committee, website, blog, etc.)</li> </ul>	Resolved from survey data that there is not enough interest for an advisory committee, but facilitating mentoring is a worthwhile pursuit to add to RL performance measures—i.e. offer them mentoring as a way to satisfy their CT requirement. See related items under leadership.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine methods for supervisors to assess skill, talent, and training needs of subordinate employees and document training/developmental needs on IDPs</li> </ul>	Done. HRD has recently added a reporting requirement for IDP via the mid-year and year end performance rating reporting. Supervisory training (see related leadership item) will stress mentoring and employee development.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify new ways (e.g., personal award; additional support for supplies and equipment) to recognize and reward scientific support staff; publicize and utilize the full range of existing Agency reward mechanisms;</li> </ul>	Resolved from survey data which showed the only recognition SSS feel they do not get enough of is authorship. See related authorship initiative for actions on that issue.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine a method to publicize success stories.</li> </ul>	Done. Quarterly ARS& You SSS spotlight under development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an on-boarding message to clarify position expectations, classification, and grade level determinations (e.g., explain the difference between Cat 1 SYs, whose grade and classification are based on the person in the job concept and others whose grade and classification are based on the job description that is based on the need of the program); provide on-boarding message to AOs and upload to the New Employee Orientation On-Line site</li> </ul>	Done. HRD adding a module on career ladders in ARS on-boarding program.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft communication to ARS-All regarding definition of position categories, and expectations (Cat 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7)</li> </ul>	Communication drafted. Will be sent out to Agency by Dr. Knipilng.
<b>TELEWORK</b>		
<b>Bradley and Blackburn and Shelton</b>	Develop and communicate the revised policy and procedures outlining the criteria, responsibilities, approvals, and sustainability of the ARS Telework Program	
	Develop standard operating procedures for administering telework agreements, supervisory and employee responsibilities, performance expectations, and logistical protocols	
	Define and enumerate an holistic technological and information infrastructure environment to sustain a viable telework program into the future	
	Establish a system for continually assessing the benefit of telework as a tool to meet the mission of ARS, recruit and retain professionals, save energy costs, operate in emergencies, and provide seamless customer service; including performance measures and metrics, identifying problems and/or issues that need to be addressed and making appropriate adjustments to the ARS Telework Program	

	Develop a pilot program (including different venues; e.g., research, administrative, rural, co-location with a university) to expand the use of telework in ARS in accordance with Administration and Departmental guidelines. The proposal will includes the following: Communication Plan, Training plan for supervisors and employees, Evaluation of technology requirements for the pilot sites, Process for evaluating the Pilot Program	
BUSINESS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT (LEAN SIX SIGMA)		
Rexroad and Arnold	Establish Business Process Board, write charter, receive initial Lean Six Sigma training	Done
	Apply Lean Six Sigma method to extramural agreements processes	February 2011 through September 2011
	Identify and prioritize other business processes for improvement	March 2011
	Hold 2-3 rapid improvement events on small processes	By September 2011
	Begin 2 <sup>nd</sup> large-scale project	September 2011
SYSTEM INTEGRATION		
Rexroad and Gibson	Define scope and linkages within ARIS and potential external to ARIS	Done
	Conduct requirements analysis to assess need for system process improvement and discovery in the reporting and output areas (survey)	March 2011
	Present project plan	Due to AC in June
	Project implementation milestones developed	June
FEDERAL EMPLOYEE VIEWPOINT SURVEY		
Bradley and Park and Drumm	Analyze 2009 data and provide recommendations to cultural transformation team	Done
	Set up team to advertise next survey and plan for future data analysis, including communication to all ARS	May
	Complete data analysis and prepare report for the whole agency	December
MATRIX MANAGEMENT		
Rexroad and St. John	Conduct quarterly teleconferences with DAs	Done
	Schedule half-day AD/DA workshop during AC	Done
	Propose topics for upcoming AC meetings	Done

	Will hold annual AD retreat	Done
<b>LEADERSHIP</b>		
<b>Park</b>	<i>Training</i> - Develop game plan to train all current and subsequent new supervisors and metrics to assess training	The HRD Employee Leadership and Development team has put together a Supervisory Training Program (STP) that would be mandatory for all supervisors. It contains pre-requisite AgLearn training as well as in class training for Crucial Conversations, MBTI, Performance and ER processes...etc. AFM Director and USDA Virtual University Provost Karlease Kelly have been briefed and HRD is awaiting "approval" for going forward. Target date of end of May.
	<i>360-degree reviews</i> – Explore process for carry-out 360-degree reviews as an important feedback too	RL Advisory Committee is considering.
	<i>Succession planning/Talent Management</i> – Explore creation of a database or other mechanism to track and manage information on employee talent and exceptional employees to share among locations	HRD has recently added a reporting requirement for IDP via the mid-year and year end performance rating reporting. The new STP should facilitate this item as well but HRD will check to verify and if it doesn't, they will work with the ADs to include into the STP or do something separate...whichever makes the most business sense... HRD Action: Joon will check and provide a recommended way forward by 27 May. System to share employee talent across the Agency has been put on hold given other critical initiatives under way and lack of resources.
<b>SENIOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH SERVICE (SSRS)</b>		
<b>Bradley and Hammond</b>	Review P&P 443.0 and the requisite authorities and: 1) investigate the possibility of using of this hiring authority more broadly as a means of retaining outstanding scientists	Draft changes to P&P and DR shared with Administrator 4/21/11.
	address with OPM the proposal to carry forward annual leave above 240 hours	Proposal denied by OPM.
	discuss pros and cons of extending probationary period to three years	Done. Will leave at one year.
<b>POLICY INTEGRITY ACROSS LOCATIONS</b>		
<b>Rexroad and Blackburn</b>		

**WALK A MILE IN SOMEONE'S MOCCASINS**

Team will outline a concept for an institutionalized exchange program between headquarters and field personnel	Done
Team will gather data on desirability of concept and issue a complete program recommendation	June